

***CONNECTICUT COALITION  
FOR  
SAFE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION***

**To:** CGA Transportation Committee

**From:** Kevin Moore,  
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**Re: Testimony Submission re HB 6369 AN ACT CONCERNING RIDE-SHARING COMPANIES AND DRIVERS**

**Date:** March 2, 2015

My name is Kevin Moore. I am the executive director for the Connecticut Coalition for Safe Public Transportation. Our coalition represents the broadest alliance of taxicab and livery companies in Connecticut, including the State's largest companies. Our organization is dedicated to encouraging uniform public policies that ensure safe transportation for Connecticut's riding public.

I respectfully submit this testimony to support enforcement on all companies and providers of ride-for-hire services in Connecticut, of the laws and regulations that exist presently pertaining to taxicab and livery services in Connecticut. Specifically, I ask the Transportation Committee to support enforcement of these laws and regulations as they pertain to Uber, whose company and drivers are in clear violation of existing laws and regulation that apply to companies and individuals who provide ride-for-hire services in this state.

Connecticut's competitive taxicab and livery industries, which include 116 taxicab and 339 livery companies, have been regulated since the 1920's. Laws and regulations evolved throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present to ensure that private transportation companies that serve the public do so in a safe and uniform manner.

Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) (13b-95) defines the term "taxicab" as including "any motor vehicle operated on any street or highway or on-call or demand accepting or soliciting passengers indiscriminately for transportation for hire between such points."

Further, CGS 13b-97b, states that "any person who (1) operates a taxicab without obtaining a certificate from the Department of Transportation pursuant to section 13b or obtaining authority to operate a taxicab from holder of such a certificate, or (2) allows an unauthorized person to operate a taxicab, which is under such person's control, shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor."

The expansion of Uber and Lyft, so-called "ride-share" companies, into Connecticut since April, 2014, in flagrant violation of Connecticut's laws and regulations, with little or no response from Connecticut lawmakers, departments and

agencies and law enforcement authorities sworn to enforce these laws, has been nothing short of astounding. The public should be concerned.

Many others will speak today from the close-up perspective of the specific roles they perform in our industries – taxicab and livery owner/operators, drivers, lawmakers, others, and how they are affected by Uber’s service. My desire is to provide you with a high level discussion of the public impact that continuing to allow Uber service to operate outside of Connecticut’s laws and regulations is likely to have. Several points may be familiar to you as I and others have provided similar information in letters to the members of this Committee in attempts to bring this information to your attention. These points bear repeating because if left unaddressed, they leave the door open to potential safety and medical emergencies, tragedies and financial hardship among Connecticut’s riding public. These are incidents that might otherwise be avoided or, at a minimum, mitigated.

Despite the clarity of Connecticut law, Uber (Lyft recently ceased operation in the state) continues to ignore important regulatory safety standards and appropriate commercial insurance coverage requirements demanded of Connecticut’s regulated taxi and livery industries. In Uber’s own words, which they issue to their passengers and drivers, *“You may be exposed to transportation that is potentially dangerous, offensive, and harmful to minors, unsafe and otherwise objectionable ... use the service at your own risk.”*

Uber and Lyft require their drivers and passengers to sign a waiver releasing them from all liability, insisting in their public statements that they are mobile app operators or ride-share services, *not* taxi and livery companies. Indeed, there exists no Connecticut state law defining exactly what a “ride-share” company or vehicle is.

In previous messages to Committee members our coalition has provided numerous examples in the form of newspaper and television news articles about incidences that have been reported around the county resulting from the use of unsafe motor vehicles and unlawful conduct on the part of Uber drivers. This article and link of an assault in nearby Massachusetts is only one example:

**NBC News: Cambridge, Mass. Police: Uber Driver Arraigned on Sexual Assault Charges**

[http://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/Cambridge-Mass-Police-Uber-Driver-Arraigned-on-Sexual-Assault-Charges-286152801.html?\\_osource=SocialFlowFB\\_CTBrand](http://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/Cambridge-Mass-Police-Uber-Driver-Arraigned-on-Sexual-Assault-Charges-286152801.html?_osource=SocialFlowFB_CTBrand)

Indeed, as this next article demonstrates, something as simplistic as obeying a regulation that requires taxicabs to be readily identifiable, perhaps in vibrant colors, for instance, typically yellow, can prevent needless confusion on the part of passengers and potential resulting tragedy:

**Woman Escapes Attempted Kidnapping at Wayne State University**

<http://m.clickondetroit.com/news/woman-escapes-attempted-kidnapping-at-wayne-state-university/31446132>

Connecticut’s riding public, by and large, as a result of careful regulation by the State of Connecticut of the taxi and livery industries over the past ninety years, has developed a high level of expectation for their personal safety in the services provided by ride for hire companies. They naturally assume that all companies providing these services are being monitored and regulated by the State of Connecticut to ensure their safety as much as can be done. Their expectations that Uber’s services bears the same level of scrutiny and safety regulation by the State, of their drivers and vehicles, from comprehensive law enforcement background checks, to regular vehicle maintenance and inspection is sorely placed. As

other jurisdictions around the country have demonstrated, Connecticut's riding public is unwittingly placing themselves in potential and easy to avoid danger.

Must Connecticut's riding public wait until there is a tragedy involving a citizen and an Uber driver before proper enforcement of existing laws and regulations is mandated? Many of the tragedies we have witnessed in other states involve accidental or unlawful actions that could have been avoided by simply requiring the same driver and vehicle safety and insurance background checks that are presently required of traditional taxi and livery companies.

As the number of lawsuits and attempts to regulate Uber and Lyft proliferate in cities and states around the nation, it is clear that jurisdictions are increasingly recognizing the need for continued regulation of *all* ride-for-hire transportation entities, including newcomers Uber and Lyft. Michigan is among the latest to take this step:

**Statewide Uber regulations sought as rideshare services evolve in Kalamazoo, other Michigan cities**  
[http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2015/02/statewide\\_uber\\_regulations\\_sou.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2015/02/statewide_uber_regulations_sou.html)

Unfortunately, unlike Connecticut's already competitive taxi and livery companies which are used to competing on a level playing field, with the same rules applying to all, \$40 billion Uber fights against a level competitive playing field. As they have done elsewhere, as this article shows in this most recent instance, when it does not get its way, Uber packs up its operations and stops offering its services, demonstrating, clearly, that it is not interested in competing fairly.

**Uber Suspends Boise Service; Cites Proposed city Rules**  
[http://www.idahostatesman.com/2015/02/26/3665754\\_breaking-uber-suspends-boise-service.html?rh=1](http://www.idahostatesman.com/2015/02/26/3665754_breaking-uber-suspends-boise-service.html?rh=1)

Connecticut taxpayers needn't lose heart that the State will miss the corporate revenue provided by the Uber company, however. Unlike Connecticut's regulated taxi and livery companies, Uber pays no taxes to the State of Connecticut.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Moore  
Executive Director  
Conn. Coalition for Safe Public Transportation

Addendum:

**Uber Flunks the Better-Business-Bureau Test**  
<http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/09/uber-flunks-the-better-business-bureau-test/?emc=eta1>